

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A supporting device for supporting insertion of a medical instrument into a human body, comprising:

a tubular member including one of a tubular member engagement section and a tubular member alignment mark, the tubular member further including an inner passageway between its opposite ends through which the medical instrument is capable of passing, wherein the tubular member is configured to guide the medical instrument into a digestive organ from an oral cavity through a pharynx, the tubular member is formed in a curved shape in advance to conform to the shape of the pharynx, and the tubular member has a diameter greater than 20mm to allow an expansion of the pharynx;

a reinforcement member formed by a thin plate extending along a perimeter of the inner passageway and having curved shapes conformable to the shape of a pharynx;

a first guiding member configured to be inserted from an oral cavity into a pharynx prior insertion to the tubular member into the pharynx, to guide the tubular member and the reinforcement member during insertion thereof from the oral cavity and into the pharynx, and to be removed from the pharynx and oral cavity while the tubular member remains inserted in the pharynx, the first guiding member including at least one of a guiding member engagement section and a guiding member alignment mark, such that when the first guiding member engagement section is engaged with the tubular member engagement section, or when the first guiding member alignment mark and the tubular member alignment mark are aligned with each other, the digestive organ end of the first guiding member is generally coincident with the digestive organ end of the tubular member; and

a second guiding member,

wherein the tubular member and the reinforcement member guide the medical instrument to the digestive organ through the inner passageway.

2. (Previously Presented) A supporting device for supporting insertion of a medical instrument into a human body, comprising:

a tubular member includes one of a tubular member engagement section and a tubular member alignment mark, the tubular member further includes an inner passageway between its opposite ends through which the medical instrument is capable of passing, wherein the tubular member is configured to guide the medical instrument into a digestive organ from an oral cavity

through a pharynx, and the tubular member has a diameter greater than 20mm to allow an expansion of the pharynx;

a reinforcement member extending along a perimeter of the inner passageway; and

a first guiding member having a diameter smaller than the inner passageway and insertable from the oral cavity of a human body into the pharynx, the first guiding member configured to guide the tubular member and the reinforcement member and including at least one of a guiding member engagement section and a guiding member alignment mark, such that with the guiding member engagement section engaged with the tubular member engagement section, or with the guiding member alignment mark and the tubular member alignment mark aligned with each other, the digestive organ end of the guiding first member is generally coincident with the digestive organ end of the tubular member; and

a second guiding member,

wherein the first and second guiding members are inserted from the oral cavity into the pharynx prior to an insertion of the tubular member, and the first and second guiding members guiding, when inserted into the pharynx, the tubular member and the reinforcement member from the oral cavity to the pharynx, and

wherein the tubular member and the reinforcement member guide the medical instrument to a digestive organ through the inner passageway.

3. Canceled

4. (Previously Presented) The supporting device of claim 1, wherein the reinforcement member has the shape of a spiral continuously extending in a center line direction of the inner passageway.

5. (Previously Presented) The supporting device of claim 1, wherein a digestive organ end of the tubular member extends toward a digestive organ ahead of a digestive organ end of the reinforcement member.

6. (Previously Presented) The supporting device of claim 1, wherein the digestive organ end of the tubular member is slanted with respect to the center line of the inner passageway.

7. (Previously Presented) The supporting device of claim 1, wherein the tubular member is molded with the reinforcement member buried therein.

8 - 9. Canceled

10. (Previously Presented) The supporting device of claim 1, wherein:
the tubular member is made of a resin material; and
the first guiding member is made of another resin material harder than the resin material of the tubular member.

11. (New) The supporting device of claim 1, wherein the first and second guiding members are tubular, and the first guiding member has a diameter smaller than the diameter of the tubular member, and the second guiding member has a diameter smaller than the first guiding member.

12. (New) The supporting device of claim 11, wherein the second guiding member is configured to guide the first tubular member, said first tubular member includes at least one of a second guiding member first engagement section and a second guiding member first alignment mark, and said second tubular member including at least one of a second guiding member second engagement section and a second guiding member second alignment mark such that with the second guiding member first engagement section engaged with the second guiding member second engagement section, or with the second guiding member first alignment mark aligned with the second, the digestive organ end of the first guiding member is generally coincident with a digestive organ end of the second guiding member.